

In the claims:

Please amend claims 1, 3 and 8 as follows:

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1. (Amended) A method for preparing a milk-based composition comprising a homopolysaccharide comprising the steps of

- A1
- (i) fermenting a mixture comprising milk and a fermentable sugar with a homopolysaccharide-producing microorganism under anaerobic conditions, and
  - (ii) stopping the fermentation before the pH of the mixture drops below pH 5.5,

the pH of the mixture being unregulated during fermentation.

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A2

3. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein the microorganism is a dextran- and/or fructan-producing lactic acid bacterium.

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A3

8. (Amended) A method according to Claim 1 wherein the mixture is inoculated with beadlets comprising the microorganism.

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